# News release

## Signal for Winter 2006/7

10 July 2006

The winter of 2006/7 for the UK is likely to be milder than the long-term average and wetter than the country experienced last winter, say Met Office long-range forecasters.

Each June, the sea-surface temperature pattern in the North Atlantic gives a hint of what type of weather may predominate across Europe the following winter. Following a period of gathering and assessing this data, Met Office experts are now in a position to give an early indication of what type of winter we might expect.

The Met Office uses a statistical method and a number of global forecasting models to provide information on the outlook for the winter. At this stage, only the statistical method is available, so this is just a first look at the prospects. This first look at winter is useful for those involved in longer-range contingency planning, for example, water and energy companies, health service and transport sector planners.

Our first official forecast for the winter will be issued in September, when information from other forecast models becomes available.

### Early indications for Winter 2006/7 (December, January and February)

**Temperature**
The signal from the statistical method is for near- or above-normal temperatures across Europe this winter. This signal is not particularly strong, but statistically the method offers good advice on two out of three occasions in predicting whether the seasonal average temperature will be above or below the long-term average. This implies that southern areas of the UK (where last year it was coldest relative to the long-term average), are likely to experience a milder season than last winter, although of course this does not rule out occasional cold snaps and snow. For northern Britain, a mild winter is signalled.

**Precipitation**
Last winter saw much drier-than-average conditions across nearly all parts of the UK - much as last autumn's forecast had suggested. In the south-east this was the continuation of a long period of dry weather starting in November 2004. Early indications are that this coming winter is likely to be wetter over the UK than last year.

Information on water resources:
Environment Agency
More information on the dry spell

The atmosphere and ocean are dynamic systems and the nature of the information they give can change with time. Further assessments of the available scientific evidence will be made through the summer and autumn months and updated statements issued as necessary, beginning with our first official forecast in September.

**Notes:**

The winter months, as defined by the Met Office for climatological purposes, are Dec-Feb (inclusive). Of course winter weather can extend beyond this period.

The long-term average figures for winter for the UK are:

1971-2000 WINTER AVERAGES

| Region | Mean temp [°C] | Precipitation [mm] |
|---|---|---|
| UK | 3.7 | 331.8 |
| England | 4.1 | 234.7 |
| Scotland | 2.7 | 463.5 |
| Wales | 4.2 | 445.2 |
| N Ireland | 4.3 | 324.0 |
| England & Wales | 4.2 | 263.6 |
| England N | 3.5 | 262.3 |
| England S | 4.5 | 220.1 |

Met Office defined regions that are used in the table

More about UK climate averages

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